

have not improved. Today, these companies, instead of going to the public equity markets, have opted to use private equity deals to divest themselves of government ownership.

I fully supported the goal of independence and competition when we enacted the ORBIT Act, and I still do today. Indeed, the action we take today is fully consistent with this policy objective.

This bill, while it does not eliminate the IPO requirement, allows other methods, which are currently being used in the marketplace to show "substantial dilution." This bill makes the ORBIT Act consistent with what is happening today in the real world.

There are certainly other issues in the ORBIT Act that deserve to be explored and I intend to ask Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee Chairman UPTON to hold a hearing on the Act early next year to examine what further needs to be accomplished. But today, I fully support S. 2896 and I urge my colleagues to support it as well.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 2896.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2004

Mr. LATOURETTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure be discharged from further consideration of the bill (H.R. 5294) to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I yield to the chairman of the subcommittee for an explanation of the measure before us.

Mr. LATOURETTE. I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR) for yielding under his reservation.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5294 is virtually identical to H.R. 3198, the John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2003, which passed the House of Representatives on November 17, 2003.

The legislation reauthorizes the programs of the Kennedy Center for 4 years. This is a bipartisan bill. I urge our colleagues to support the bill.

I want to thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), the distinguished ranking member of the full Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for his work; also the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), the ranking member

of our subcommittee, for the outstanding work on this bill and so many others during the 108th Congress.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Further reserving the right to object, Mr. Speaker, I compliment the chairman of the subcommittee for his diligent work in shepherding this bill through this historic moment.

He has been a dedicated and informed and forthright leader of the subcommittee and on the issues under its jurisdiction, particularly those relating to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

For the last decade, as a member of the Board of Trustees, I have watched firsthand the center undertake major capital projects, renovating the theaters, creating state-of-the-art concert halls, the Opera House, replacing a badly deteriorated roof.

Throughout all these major capital maintenance renovation construction projects, the center opened every day of the year and welcomed over 5 million visitors and has stayed true to its mission as a national cultural arts center and a living memorial to our 35th President.

The chairman has described the principal features of the bill. What I want to emphasize, however, is the great difficulty of running this incredible living memorial and arts center while managing the major construction initiatives. The Kennedy Center, in doing so, and the chairman I know agrees with this position, must improve its construction management.

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The General Accounting Office reviewed the Kennedy Center's operation and found that the Center needs, one, to develop policy and procedures to guide the plans and management of its construction projects; two, ensure that its construction contractors provide schedule and cost information in a timely fashion; and three, invest in the key human capital resources and the expertise to manage better its construction projects.

The Center has made progress. The chairman has held hearings on this matter, and we greatly appreciate those hearings. They reveal that the Center needs to do much better.

Just last month, GAO reported that the Center has not updated its building plan each year as the law requires. The building plan does not explain how the Kennedy Center prioritizes its capital projects. It fails to provide adequate information on project-specific status, updates and budgets so that we in the Congress and the board of trustees will have the information necessary to ensure that the Center's capital projects are well managed.

I think this legislation, by requiring further steps to strengthen the construction management process, will move the Kennedy Center forward in directions that we feel are important, and for that, I thank the chairman for his vigilance and greatly appreciate the partnership.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the bill, as follows:

H.R. 5294

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "John F. Kennedy Center Reauthorization Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATIONS OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 13 of the John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76f) is amended by striking subsections (a) and (b) and inserting the following:

"(a) MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND SECURITY.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Board to carry out section 4(a)(1)(H)—

"(1) \$17,000,000 for fiscal year 2004; and

"(2) \$18,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007.

"(b) CAPITAL PROJECTS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Board to carry out subparagraphs (F) and (G) of section 4(a)(1)—

"(1) \$16,000,000 for fiscal year 2004; and

"(2) \$18,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007."

SEC. 3. JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER PLAZA.

(a) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY.—Section 12(b) of the John F. Kennedy Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76q-1(b)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(6) PROJECT TEAM.—

"(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—To further construction of the Project, the Secretary shall establish a Project Team.

"(B) MEMBERSHIP.—The Project Team shall be composed of the following members:

"(i) The Secretary (or the Secretary's designee).

"(ii) The Administrator of General Services (or the Administrator's designee).

"(iii) The Chairman of the Board (or the Chairman's designee).

"(iv) Such other individuals as the Project Team considers appropriate.

"(C) PROJECT DIRECTOR.—The Project Team shall have a Project Director who shall be appointed by the Secretary, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the Chairman of the Board. The Project Director shall report directly to the Project Team."

(b) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 12(c)(1) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 76q-1(c)(1)) is amended by inserting ", in consultation with the Project Team," after "The Board".

(2) CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS.—Section 12(c)(3) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 76q-1(c)(3)) is amended by inserting ", in consultation with the Project Team," after "The Board".

(3) APPROVAL BY PROJECT TEAM.—Section 12(c) of such Act (20 U.S.C. 76q-1(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(5) APPROVAL BY PROJECT TEAM.—Notwithstanding section 5(e), any decision by the Board that will significantly affect, as determined by the Project Team in consultation with the Board, the scope, cost, schedule, or engineering feasibility of any element of the Project, other than buildings to be constructed on the Plaza, shall be subject to the approval of the Project Team."

(c) GAO REVIEW.—Section 12 of such Act (20 U.S.C. 76q-1) is amended by adding at the end the following: